

**THE MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL OF SMALL AND LIGHT WEAPON USAGE: A
STUDY OF AWKA ANAMBRA STATE, NIGERIA**

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Abstract

The proliferation of small arms and light weapons is one of the major security challenges currently facing Nigeria, Africa and indeed the world in general. The trafficking and wide availability of these weapons fuel communal conflict, political instability and pose a threat, not only to national security, but also to sustainable development. The lack of control of small arms usage is contributing to alarming levels of armed crime, and militancy. Therefore, the trust of this project dwell on scanning the role of government and policy makers, in checking the control and management of SALW in Nigeria and to ascertain the level of insecurity this menace had incurred in the Nigerian state. It was revealed that inability of the Nigeria government and the law enforcement agencies to check the supply and the demand factors of the proliferation of SALW in Nigeria has heightened and worsened the security situations in parts of the country. The project further asserts that availability of small arms have direct influence on the escalation and sustenance of insecurity and therefore, drew a conclusion on the basis of which the recommendations were made.

Introduction

The proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW) has become one of the most urgent security and developmental challenges in Africa today. The uncontrolled proliferation and widespread availability of small arms is a development that is affecting virtually every African country and poses threats to domestic and regional security. The problems posed by small arms proliferation are complex and multidimensional in character. They are entangled with other broad security and societal issues such as conflict prevention and resolution, poverty, gender, cultures of violence, governance issues, criminal activity and links to terrorism. It also has serious implications for human rights and humanitarian activities (Ogaba, 2005: 9-10).

According to Gamba, it is believed that more than 500 million SALW are in existence globally, and these are produced in large numbers in more than 70 countries (www.iss.co.za/pubs/books/govarmsblurd.html). These weapons have fueled dozens of intra-state and local conflicts around the globe; killing, injuring and displacing millions of people primarily women and children. The damage and destruction caused by small arms in Africa is indeed astounding. Armed conflicts, which have been carried out largely with small arms in Africa, have been the most visible manifestation of the devastation caused by arms. According to World Health Organization (WHO), in 2000 alone, about 167,000 Africans died as result of conflicts (http://who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/world_report/en/).

Over the past several years, the annual production of small arms has averaged between 7 and 8 million weapons with the United States and Russia Federation accounting for about 5 million of the new production. It is estimated that there are in the region of 650 million small arms in circulation. Out of that an estimated 5 percent of the total, is in sub-Saharan Africa (Ogaba, 2005: 11). The surprising finding however, as reported by the *Small Arms Survey: Year Book 2001* is that only about 2 percent of the small arms in Africa (about 600,000) are thought to be in the hands of armed groups or insurgents. Thus, the relatively few number of weapons that have brought devastation and destruction in various parts of Africa highlights the lethal damaging capabilities of small arms weapons.

Besides being a direct cause of deaths, the effects of small arms are far-reaching when consideration is given to its economic cost, social upheavals, resource allocation away from human needs, and the undermining of the legitimacy of the states in Africa. According to the Oxfam International,

armed conflict costs Africa around \$18 billion per year (www.oxfam.org/en/policy/bp107_africa_missing_billions). There is also a psychological dimension to the damage that is being perpetrated by small arms proliferation and use. Increasingly, across large parts of Africa, there is the growing perception that the well-being and security of individuals and communities can only be guaranteed through the possession of small arms.

In West Africa, the evidence of proliferation is an extreme concern. Out of the 650 million SALW circulating globally, some estimated 7 million are in West Africa, and 77,000 small arms are in the hands of major West African insurgent groups (*Small Arms Survey*, 2003: 82). In West Africa, small arms are easily obtainable and at low prices. For example, according to military sources in Nigeria, pistols can be obtained for between N3, 000 (about US\$25) and N7, 000 (about US\$58), depending on the type, seller, and area of purchase. In zones of conflict such as the Mano River Union (MRU), which is comprised of Guinea-Conakry, Liberia, and Sierra Leone, small arms appear easier to obtain illicitly than in more stable areas, and at considerably cheaper prices, although these can be extremely volatiles due to market conditions (Ebo, 2003).

Statement Of Problem

Uncontrolled accumulation and spread of SALW poses a threat to peace and security and has reduced the prospects of sustainable development throughout the subregion of West Africa. Free cross border activity coupled with relatively weak administrative legislative and regulatory measures on weapons within each country have contributed to the indiscriminate proliferation of SALW from abroad and from within the sub-region. Recognizing the indiscriminate proliferation of weapons fuelling these conflicts had a negative impact on regional development and human security, ECO WAS member states adopted a *Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Small Arms and Light Weapons in West Africa* at the 21st Session of the meeting of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS on 30th October, 1998 for a renewable period of three years; It was renewed successively in 2001 and 2004 (Mohammed, 2008).

On June 14, 2006, the ECOWAS Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Small Arms and Light Weapons was transformed in to a convention and became the *ECO WAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials*. These are all geared towards curbing the proliferation of SALW within the ECOWAS sub-region.

Despite these efforts, Jennifer (2007) noted that there are an estimated seven to ten million illicit small arms and light weapons in West Africa. She goes further to state that there are an estimated one million to three million small arms and light weapons in circulation in Nigeria alone. Civilians possess the majority of weapons in the country. Millions of Nigerians have been killed or displaced as a result, and an immeasurable amount of property has been destroyed. SALW have been used to grossly violate human rights, to facilitate the practice of bad governance, to subvert constitutions, to carry out coups d'état and to create and maintain a general state of fear, insecurity and instability. They are also being employed for non-political and non-conflict-related crime and violence.

The oil-rich Delta region of Nigeria has seen conflict since 2003 involving well- armed militia groups motivated in part by economic interest in stolen crude oil. These groups use a range of sophisticated weapons, such as semi- and fully automatic rifles, alongside more traditional weapons to carry out deadly and paralysing attacks on oil and gas installations. They have killed scores of security officials, damaged oil facilities and infrastructure, and shut down oil production. They have also taken foreign oil workers hostage. Hundreds of people have been killed in the violence, which has also resulted in the displacement of thousands and the destruction of hundreds of properties.

Awka Metropolis

Awka (Igbo: *Oka*) is the capital of Anambra State, Nigeria with an estimated population of 301,657 As of 2006 Nigerian census. The city is located 199.1 kilometres (123.7 mi), by road, directly north of Port Harcourt in the centre of the densely populated Igbo heartland in south east Nigeria.¹³¹

The West-East Federal highway links Lagos, Benin City, Asaba, Onitsha, and Enugu to Awka and several local roads link it to other important towns such as Ekwalobia, Agulu, Enugwu-Ukwu, Abagana and Nnewi. Strategically, Awka is located midway between two major cities in Northern Igboland, Onitsha and Enugu which has informed its choice as an administrative center for the colonial authorities and today as a base for the Anambra State government.

History

Awka has a certain kind of aura about it, because it was the place of the blacksmiths that created implements which made agriculture possible. -- Chinua Achebe

Awka is one of the oldest settlements in Igboland established at the centre of the Nri civilization which produced the earliest documented bronze works in Sub-Saharan Africa around 800 AD and was the cradle of Igbo civilization. The earliest settlers of Awka were the Ifiteana people which translates into people who sprouted from the earth. They were farmers, hunters, and skilled iron workers who lived on the banks of the Ogwugwu stream in what is now known as Nkwelle ward of Awka.

The deity of the Ifiteana was known as Okika-na-u-be or the god pre-eminent with the spear and the Ifiteana were known as Umu-Okanube or “worshippers of Okanube”, which eventually became shortened to Umu-Oka and eventually Oka and its anglicized version "Awka". In ancient times, Awka was populated by elephants with a section of the town named Ama-enyi (haunt of elephants) and a pond Iyi-Enyi where the elephants used to gather to drink. The elephants were hunted for their prized ivory tusks (okike) which was kept as a symbol to the god Okanube in every Awka home with hunting medicine stored in the hollow of the tusk.

Over time, the town become famous for metal working of a high level and its blacksmiths were prized throughout the region for making farming implements, Dane guns and ceremonial items such as Oji (staff of mystical power) and Ngwuagilija (staff of Ozo men). In pre-colonial days Awka also became famous as the home of the Agbala Oracle a deity that was said to be a daughter of the great Long Juju shrine of Arochukwu. The Agbala Oracle (which Chinua Achebe drew on for inspiration in his book Things Fall Apart^[4]) was consulted to resolve disputes far and wide until it was finally destroyed by colonial authorities in the early part of the 20th century.

Before the inception of British rule, Awka was governed by titled men known as Ozo and Ndichie who were accomplished individuals in the community. They held general meetings or Izu Awka either at the residence of the oldest man (Otochal Awka) or at a place designated by him. He was the Nne Uzu or master blacksmith, whether he knew the trade or not, for the only master known to Awka people was the master craftsman, the Nne Uzu.

In modern times Awka has adapted to the republican system and is currently administered by the Awka South Local Government Area. However, it still preserves traditional systems of governance with the respected Ozo titled men often consulted for village and community issues and a paramount cultural representative, the Eze Uzu who is elected by all Ozo titled men by rotation amongst different villages to represent the city at state functions.

People; Awka comprises seven Igbo groups sharing common blood lineage divided into two sections. Ifite Section, the senior section, comprises four groups, Ayom-na-Okpala, Nkwelle, Amachalla, and Ifite-Oka followed by Ezinator Section, which consists of three groups, Amikwo, Ezi-Oka and Agulu. Each of these groups has a number of villages. All together, Awka comprises 33 villages.

Awka people today as in traditional times are well travelled. In ancient times demand for their skills as blacksmiths had Awka people travelling throughout Nigeria making farming implements, household tools and guns. Each village had clearly defined trade routes. For example, people from Umuogbu village plied their trade in Benin and in the Urhobo and Itsekiri areas, Umubele were stationed in the Igala areas in modern-day Kogi state, Umuike and Umuonaga in present-day Abia and Rivers State, Umuenechi in the Kwale and Isoko area of Delta state, and Umudiana, Okperi, Ugwuogige stationed in Calabar area of today's Cross Rivers state.

The people of Umudioka and Ezioka wards specialized in carving of wood, and ivory and arts designs including elegantly carved tools, door shutters and door panels, chairs, vessels for presentation of kola nuts, and idols. The ivory carvers produced elegant designs on “odu okike” (ivory trumpet) for ozo titled men and other items as part of the paraphernalia for titled men.

Today, Awka people can be found all across the globe many working as skilled professionals in a wide range of fields. As a result, there is a large Awka diaspora located primarily in the UK and in the United States. There, they have formed social clubs like Awka Union USA and Canada, Awka Town Social Community UK and Ireland and other community associations. These associations have been a way for people to enjoy their culture as well as to engage in community self-help projects.

Group	Villages
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Ayom-na-Okpala	Umuayom, Umunnoko, Umuoramma and Umuokpu.
Nkwelle	Achallaoji, Umunamoke, Agbana, Umudiaba
Amachalla	Amachalla, Amudo, Umuzocha
Ifite-Oka	Enu-Ifite, Ezinato-Ifite, Agbana-Ifite
Amikwo	Umudiana, Okperi, Igweogige, Isiagu, Obunagu
Ezi-Oka	Omuko, Umueri, Umuogwal, Umuogbunu 1, Umuogbunu 2, Umudioka, Umukwa.
Agulu	Umuogbu, Umubele, Umuanaga, Umuike, Umujagwo, Umuenechi, Umuoruka.

Over the years Awka Town has attracted people from other states in Nigeria and has a significant number of immigrants from northern Nigeria, Delta and Enugu states, Cameroon and Ghana now comprising more than 60% of residents in the town.

It is also a popular name among Nigerians.

Geography;

Awka lies below 300 metres above sea in a valley on the plains of the Mamu River. Two ridges or cuestas, both lying in a North-South direction, form the major topographical features of the area. The ridges reach the highest point at Agulu just outside the Capital Territory. About six kilometers east of this, the minor cuesta peaks about 150 metres above sea level at Ifite –Awka.

Awka is sited in a fertile tropical valley but most of the original Rain forest has been lost due to clearing for farming and human settlement. A few examples of the original rain forest remains at places like the Ime Oka shrine. Wooded savannah grassland predominates primarily to the north and east of the city. South of the town on the slopes of the Awka-Orlu Uplands are some examples of soil erosion and gullying.

Economy

The economy of Awka city revolves primarily around government since many state and federal institutions are located there. Awka hosts the State Governor's Lodge, State Assembly and State Ministries for Health, Education, Lands, Water.

The Anambra Broadcasting Service (ABS) a TV and radio station are located in the city centre. A number of federal institutions including the Central Bank of Nigeria (which has a currency centre in Awka), the NTA Awka media station, and branches of the Federal Inland Revenue Service, Federal Road Safety Commission, Nigerian Immigration Service, and Corporate Affairs Commission are also present in the city.

In recent years, several new businesses have erected fascinating new buildings that have largely changed the face of Awka city. The partly state-owned Orient Petroleum Resources Ltd has the headquarters in Awka. The company is poised to set up a refinery at Igbariam to jump-start the exploitation of the huge crude oil deposits in the Anambra River basin. Also Juhel Nigeria has constructed a manufacturing plant for Parenteral drugs in the city.

Major Nigerian Banks such as Access Bank, Bank PHB, Diamond Bank, Ecobank, First Bank, Intercontinental, Oceanic Bank, UBA, Union Bank and Zenith Bank have opened branches in the city.

Urban planning and Renewal

Prior to the Nigerian Civil War, Awka townspeople maintained the city on their own. Market traders cleaned around their stalls; streets and pathways and compounds were swept. Blocked storm drains would be cleared by residents.^[7] Yet now Awka is often seen as the state capital with the worst infrastructure in Nigeria (a country sharing the same state of infrastructure) with less than 10% of its roads paved, inadequate storm drainage, poor public water supply, garbage dumped on the sides of roads and a nonexistent sewage system. This has been because Awka has suffered from decades of neglect and poor urban governance in Anambra State due to corruption and deception from many of state governors.

The first attempt to address the urban decay was made by the Government of Peter Obi who forged a technical cooperation agreement with UN-HABITAT in 2007 to provide technical assistance in the preparation of a structure plan for Awka Capital Territory. The Structural Plan of Awka Capital Territory (2009–2028) ^[8] is designed as a Core-Multi-Nuclei urban design with Awka, Amawbia and Umuokpu serving as the core of the city with linkages to the major towns of Adazi-Nnukwu, Agulu, ABBA, Abagana, Agukwu-Nri, Amanssea, Enugwu-Ukwu, Enugwu-Agidi, Isiagu, Isu-Aniocha, Mgbakwu, Nawfia, Nawgu, Nibo, Nimo, Nise, Okpuno and Umuawulu.

There is no universally accepted definition of SALW. This is because the understanding of what constitutes these categories of weapons has undergone some changes due to the dynamics of technological development, however, good working definitions abound. These tend to describe such arms and weapons either by their configuration, characteristics, size, user perspective or a combination of some of these.

The Royal Military College of Science (RMCS) Handbook (1993) on weapons and vehicles defines small arms as:

Man portable, largely shoulder controlled weapons of up to 12.7mm (0.5”) caliber; such weapons generally have a flat trajectory and an effective operational range of 0-800m, although this varies considerably with caliber and weapon type, certain weapons can also provide neutralizing fire out to 1800m.

The UN Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms (1997) considers SALW as those

Weapons ranging from knives, clubs and machetes to weapons particularly below the caliber of 100mm-small-small arms are those weapons manufactured to military specification and designed for use by one person, whereas light weapons are those used by several persons working as a crew.

The Bureau of Political-Military Affairs (2001) of the US Department of State primarily designed for individual use by military forces as lethal weapons.” It further explains that a typical list of small arms would include self-loading pistols, rifles and carbines, sub-machine guns, assault rifles and light machine guns.

Michael (1994) views small arms as “weapons that can be carried by an individual. This includes everything from revolvers and pistols to machine guns, light anti-tank weapons and shoulder fired surface –to-air missiles.” From a utilitarian perspective, E.J. Laurence views them simply as those weapons that can be carried by an infantry soldier or perhaps a small vehicle or pack animal (<http://www.miis.edu/cns.html>).

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), in 1983, enlarged the original world War II definition of small arms as encompassing “all crew-portable direct fire weapons of a caliber less than 50mm and which include secondary capability to defeat light armour and helicopters.” The NATO definition brings most automatic assault rifles such as Ak-47 series, USM16, the Israeli Uzi rifle, as well as all types of rocket-propelled grenade launchers (RPGs), machine/sub-machine guns, shoulder fired surface-to-air missiles (SAMs) under the category of small arms (NATO quote in Obasi, 2001). It has been argued that the ECOWAS Small Arms Moratorium left out weapons such as knives, axes and clubs in its categorization of small arms although these weapons, which are traditionally made by local blacksmiths, are readily the first set of weapons used in escalating violent conflicts and crimes at the community level. An inclusive definition of SALW should embrace these categories of weapons (Ochoche, 2001).

MODES OF ACQUISITION; The obvious thing is that the means of acquiring weapons today are much greater and different from those of the Cold War period. The reason is that the Cold War arms trading system was more strictly controlled than the one that exists today, especially in the case of small arms and light weapons (Laurence, 2010). It is not a false argument to say that Cold War arms trading system which have non-state actors as its dominant feature (i.e. as the superpowers and their allies supplied their clients in pursuit of political and ideological goals), did not receive 100% government control. The truth is that during the era, the control of these weapons was not perfect, especially for weapons sent to non-state actors. But at least in the case of the initial production and transfer of these weapons to states and non-state actors, government that much of the supply and acquisition of small arms and light weapons is through legitimate trade that occurs among governments or among legal entities authorized by governments. As countries that manufacture small arms and light weapons continue to export them legitimately, along with their surplus of use weapons, they continue to be imported legally by counties in regions of conflict, -- legal being defined as any transfer that is not “contrary to the laws of states and/or international law” (Laurence, 2010). This takes place as granted (aid), particularly when a large army is decreasing in size and wishes to export its surplus weapons. Government to government sales can take place as well, but the dominant mode of legitimate transfer is the commercial sale. The transfer is normally controlled under national procedures in both the supplier and recipient state, through export licenses and end-user certificates.

Equally, a government that want to bolster its own security and political power, arms sub-national groups that support its political or social policies and act as a supplement to government security forces. This often takes the form of arming “self-defense” force or liberalizing arms acquisition procedures for individual citizens. Both types of holders can end up retaining weapons when the need for such forces or possession diminishes, especially at the end of a peace process. This has occurred in many places, including South Africa, Mozambique, Colombia, and Guatemala. Attempts to register surplus weapons in a post conflict phase can be complicated by such transfers and distribution (ibid).

Several major changes have taken place since the Cold War ended that resulted in much of the trade in small arms and light weapons not conforming to the above definitions of legal trade.

The first one is that trade in SALW has shifted from old to newly produced weapons (Ibid). The second one is that many countries are now capable of producing light weaponry. This is made possible due to the diffusion of arms producing technology during the Cold War. The third aspect has to do with the fact that the overall manufacturing of small arms and light weapons has reduced significantly since the end of the Cold War. The major reason for this is that much of the SALW supplied during the Cold War has remained in the regions where these conflicts were fought, thus creating a surplus pool to be re-circulated and diffused into society. According to the United Nations Disarmament Commission Report one factor bearing on the availability, circulation, and accumulation of these weapons in many areas of conflict is their earlier supply by Cold War opponents (United Nations Disarmament Commission Report, 1995: 15).

SOURCES OF SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS

The sources of SALW in the Niger Delta are international, regional and sub-regional. After the conclusion of the Cold War, the deregulation of former state arms industries in

Eastern and Central Europe led to an aggressive search for new arms markets in the developing world. Through the activities of states, arms brokers and mercenaries thousands of weapons have been transferred into the Niger Delta region and used by state security forces, the security factions of oil companies and insurgent groups (Onuoha, 2006). Those weapons that are traded include semi-automatic rifles, shotguns, machine-guns, and shoulder-fired rockets (known as ‘bazookas’). These weapons are readily available for purchase in Warri at prices that range from around US\$570 for a shotgun, or US\$850 for a Kalashnikov rifle, to US\$2, 150 for a ‘bazooka’. In 2002, the Nigerian Customs Service reportedly intercepted small arms and ammunition worth more than N4.3 billion (US\$30 million) at border posts during the first six months of the year (Onuoha, 2006).

Insurgents have been known to steal or purchase small arms from government soldiers. Sometimes, state security personnel double-up as arms dealers. However, other reasons that account for the leakages from official sources include: the breakdown of state structures, lax controls over national armouries, and poor service conditions of security personnel. The industrial zones in the southeast of Nigeria, like Aba and Awka, are also home to the manufacture of arms (Onuoha, 2006).

WHAT TYPE OF WEAPONS? The most common weapons used by militants in the Niger Delta are assault rifles, machine guns, rocket propelled grenades and explosives. In 2002 and 2003, weapons were often sourced from civil wars in neighbouring countries, previous communal conflicts and some captured during clashes with police and military. Leading up to the 2003 elections newer weapons were supplied primarily through political patrons. After the 2003 election, new weapons were procured through illegal crude oil bunkering where vessels brought weapons in and took stolen oil out. As international arms sources were accessed through illegal arms dealers in 2006 and 2007 the quality of weapons improved. The range of weapons in the hands of non-state forces in the Niger Delta includes AK-47s, General Purpose Machine Guns (GPMG), Light Machine Guns, Rocket Propelled Grenades (RPG), German G3 assault rifles, explosives (nitropil, dynamite, plastic), and electronic remote detonation devices. More sophisticated weapons acquired by militia have not yet been deployed. Weapons being acquired by non-state forces include features of night vision and increased targeting accuracy (Coventry Cathedral, 2009)

VOLUME OF ILLEGAL SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS; There are an estimated seven to ten million illicit small arms and light weapons in West Africa (Hazen et al, 2007: 8). There are an estimated one million (Ebo, 2006: 1) to three million (Nnamdi, 2002: 69) small arms and light weapons in circulation in Nigeria. But, whereas illegal small arms are most commonly associated

with militia activity in the Niger Delta, it is the civilians in the villages that possess the majority of weapons in the country. These weapons pose a significant challenge to law and order and a high risk to personal security” (Hazen et al, 2007: 25). As militia groups fractured in 2005 and former commanders formed new groups the demand for weapons steadily grew. The formation of MEND and its emergence in a dramatic fashion with several high profile kidnappings early in 2005 saw a rapid expansion in demand which was met by access to the international arms market.

LOCAL ILLEGAL ARMS MARKETS; Weapons drifted into Nigeria through porous borders from conflicts in other African countries and came with the Nigerian military forces force returning from peace-keeping missions to such places as Liberia and Sierra Leone. Supply significantly increased to meet demand which increased significantly when youth in the Niger Delta were mobilised to secure elections. The need to secure elections meant that powerful political patrons were able to open the way for supplies of illegal weapons to reach their required destinations. Weapons were being landed on the docks in Lagos and quickly cleared by customs. Clearly there was complicity on the docks. The illegal weapons were then transported by road both to the Niger Delta and to illegal arms markets in the middle belt. Militias have expressed their confidence at the ease with which they could transport weapons from Lagos to the Niger Delta. Illegal small arms are readily available from Aba, Onitsha or Enugu arms markets. Aba plays a central role in the supply of used weapons to the local Rivers State market. In one case a Local Government Chairman retained a large, unofficial security force which he armed by purchase of weapons from the Aba market. In April 2006 the spot price at the Aba market for an AK-47 was N200,000. Other towns renowned for the availability of weapons include Asaba, Benin City, Warri, Owerri, Awka, and Port Harcourt (Hazen et al, 2007). Leading up to the 2003 elections there were three prominent areas known for the ease of entry for illegal weapons. In the south-west there are Idi-Iroko in Ogun State and Seme in Lagos State; in the south there is Warri in Delta State; and in the north-east at the border with Niger and Cameroon (Agboton-Johnson et al, 2004: 21). However by 2003 militia spoke more of shipments through Lagos and the ease of distribution to arms markets in the south and the middle belt. In 2004 consignments of small arms were being transhipped from Liberia bound vessels standing off the Niger Delta coast to small fast speed boats used by the militia.

A. THOSE INVOLVED IN ILLEGAL WEAPONS PROLIFERATION

The identity of persons involved in the supply of illegal weapons either directly or indirectly includes former federal ministers, state commissioners, local government chairmen, state security officers, Nigerian military officers, and senior officers of federal government statutory authorities (Coventry Cathedral, 2009). Weapons have been landed at ports in the Niger Delta with the knowledge and complicity of senior state security officers. Local Nigerian illegal arms dealers use Niger Delta ports to import illegal weapons through import-export businesses and distribute the weapons through their state networks particularly in Akwa Ibom and Anambra states. Military personnel have been involved in supplying weapons from the Nigerian military's armouries. Training camps led by ex-military officers were functioning in strategic locations throughout the Niger Delta in 2006. Some non-state forces have been sponsored by senior government officials by way of regular payments akin to salaries (Coventry Cathedral, 2009).

Short Term Rental Of Weapons

Day hire of weapons from military and police officers has become a feature of the illegal use of small arms in the Niger Delta. Hire of automatic weapons in 2006 ranged from N5,000 to N20,000 per day depending on the job they were to be used for and success of the operation. At that time it was also possible to hire a "trigger finger" with weapon for additional N 10,000 - N20,000. President Obasanjo raised the subject of illegal supply of weapons from Nigeria's state security agencies as early as December 2002 when he stated that “the majority of small arms and light weapons circulating in Nigeria were either sold or rented out by, or stolen from, the country's security agencies” (Ginifer et al, 2007: 6-7).

CONFISCATION OF ILLEGAL WEAPONS

The number of illegal small arms seized by Nigeria's customs is ridiculously small. Weapons seizures at border points known to be key ports of entry for shipments of illegal arms such as Lagos and Port

Harcourt are almost unknown. Similarly, recovery of illegal arms by the Nigerian military and police is negligible (Coventry Cathedral, 2009).

THE CONTROL OF ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS

Following a period of violent conflict, such as has occurred in some Niger Delta states, no cessation of the conflict could return the social and political setting to its former pre-conflict situation. Thus all parties accepted there would be a new reality but more importantly that they could help to construct the new social, political and economic dimensions of the new reality (Coventry Cathedral, 2009). The concept of conversion relates to the transition from violent conflict to peace and the consequent change of use of economic and social resources and change of vocation of former combatants (Gormally, 2001: 2). The creation of a peaceful society is predicated on finding solutions to the issues that lay at the root of conflict. A solution imposed by one party is unlikely to form the basis of an enduring peace with sustained improvement in the quality of life of all participants. A sustained peace with justice requires an agreed process in which all stakeholders are willing participants.

There were four broad parts to the peace process. First there was the demobilization of the militia. Second there was the disarmament. Third was the weapons destruction which was conducted to international standards. Fourth is the ongoing reintegration of former non-state combatants which involves counselling for the former nonstop combatants and building the community capacity to receive the former nonstop combatants back into mainstream society.

THE ROLE OF DISARMAMENT

Disarmament includes disarming of combatants and irregular forces, weapons buyback programmes and arms embargoes and control. In the Niger Delta disarmament was related to the search for stability and implemented under the supervision of government representatives. Federal forces undertook disarmament processes and the verification and monitoring of faction compliance.

The lack of clear confidence-building measures was an obstacle to the disarmament. There is a close correlation between the level of insecurity and distrust among faction groups and the quantity and quality of weapons surrendered. Mutual suspicion among faction groups contributed to non-compliance with disarmament components amid acrimonious reciprocal accusations of violations during the harvest of weapons in October 2004 (Lewis et al, 2005). The issue of disarmament has been addressed in a range of situations throughout the world in recent years: Uganda (1992), Mozambique (1994), Bosnia (1995), Sierra Leone (1997), Northern Ireland (1998), and Kosovo (1999). Recent disarmament efforts in Burundi, Cote d'Ivoire and Liberia suffered from inadequate funding and lack of trust between government and rebels, issues which must be addressed in the Niger Delta situation if disarmament is to be successful.

Weapons buy-back programme was an economic incentive scheme to encourage faction participation in the disarmament programme. As a result, a cash-for-arms programme, whereby the militants were given cash rewards, small-scale business loan and job training schemes to provide alternative possibilities for post-combat activities was introduced. The critical factor was the reintegration of combatants who had been living a life of violence and crime to productive ventures and alternative modes of useful contribution to social development. However, weapons buy-back programmes have had limited medium-term impact on reducing the number of weapons circulating in countries which have porous borders with countries with active weapons market; lack of capacity to enforce regulations on the open carrying of weapons and apolitical, economic or security climate which promotes the security and economic value of owning and using a weapon.

FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS

In the Niger Delta, disarmament has been seen as an end in itself with the view that when the non-state forces are disarmed the threat will subside and peace will flow as a natural result. Thus disarmament is often pushed too quickly, some components are disregarded, the non-state combatants become nervous, trust breaks down and the process stalls or collapses. Disarmament is the first component cited in the DDR (disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration). Disarmament must be seen as an integral part of the overall peace making process. In the Niger Delta 2004 Peace Accord disarmament occurred quickly after the principle points of the ensuing Peace Accord were agreed on 01 October 2004 in the Cabinet Room at a meeting between President Obasanjo and militia

leaders. The funds for demobilization had evaporated by early 2005 and by March former combatants were being recruited as mercenaries for operations in other countries. The militias depended on their arms for survival. The force of arms was their strength and their bargaining power. Thus they were unwilling to relinquish their weapons until they had clear and credible evidence that all matters agreed with the government would be implemented and there was a credible high profile international third party who would oversee and publicly report on the process at the frequent intervals (Coventry Cathedral, 2009).

DDR programs must have sufficient funding to complete their implementation, and to provide for contingencies in a flexible way. Failure to complete a DDR program can jeopardize the entire peace process and obstruct economic recovery. Former non-state combatants who are not successfully demobilized and reintegrated can easily fuel new violence, and may return to conflict as the only possible way to make a living. A new escalation in violence can then destroy the results of piecemeal interventions and partial implementation of DDR. The Niger Delta has seen a variety of conflict situations. Various remedies have been applied ranging from security solutions, disarmament and demobilization to conflict resolution. In many cases solutions have been instituted with the full intent of procuring a temporary peace in order to satisfy an external, often international audience (Coventry Cathedral, 2009).

PROBLEM-SOLVING PEACE SETTLEMENT

The conditions of security and inclusion must be integrated into a political agreement defining the end of hostilities and the implementation of DDR. Experience has shown that DDR programs cannot drive a peace process. DDR can only be implemented in the context of a negotiated settlement, a ceasefire, or a peace agreement. It can reinforce the agreement, as a form of security guarantee and a confidence-building measure, but it cannot precede the agreement (ibid).

PROVISION OF ADEQUATE SECURITY

A safe environment is required in order for parties to give up their weapons, and for DDR institutions to operate. Only trust can break the cycle of violence, allowing warring individuals and parties to disarm and resume civilian life. Third parties play an important role in guaranteeing compliance with a ceasefire, respect for public order, the safety of individuals, and equitable implementation of disarmament programs. Peacekeeping forces cannot be expected to end hostilities,

DDR programs cannot succeed without careful coordination of the phases of DDR by the different actors at the local and national levels. Disarmament without reintegration, and demobilization without prior disarmament and planned economic and social reintegration, are short-lived efforts. Necessary ingredients include, a credible and authoritative national institution to plan, implement, and oversee the program at the national level; peacekeeping forces and military personnel implement disarmament; civilian organizations and institutions to provide food, education, and health care to demobilized ex-combatants; local communities which are sensitized and directly involved in the social and economic integration of demobilized former non-state combatants (Ibid).

INVOLVEMENT OF ALL COMBATANTS

In order to establish a safe environment and break the security dilemma, it is necessary that all parties be included in the DDR program and disarmed simultaneously. Otherwise it is easy for one party to resume fighting, taking advantage of its opponents' disarmament. It is important that all parties develop ownership of the process and do not feel discriminated against, that different parties feel that they are being treated equitably, and that they are given the same opportunities to reintegrate into society. Institutions implementing DDR should communicate regularly and frequently with each party at the political and military commander level. External observers and peacekeepers should be perceived by all sides to be impartial, neutral, and credible (ibid).

WEAPONS DESTRUCTION PROGRAMME

Weapons destruction is an aspect of the disarmament programmes. Most of the weapons delivered for destruction were serviceable under the modalities for monitoring the implementation an end to militant activities. After the serviceable weapons delivered by factions were registered most of them were destroyed. Depending on the quality of the weapon presented, some were not recognized as weapons at all but were simply destroyed and there were many cases.

POLICIES, MEASURE AND CONTROL OPTIONS

In the Niger Delta, SALW have been used to exacerbate conflicts, to engage in criminal activities such as

banditry, theft of crude oil (known as ‘oil-bunkering’) and kidnapping, and to intimidate opposition groupings. Given the availability of SALW in the Niger Delta region, sustainable peace is difficult to achieve in this poverty-stricken and densely populated area. Concerted efforts should be made to reduce the proliferation and misuse of SALW in the Niger Delta region. Such an approach should address both the demand and supply aspects of the SALW problem. In terms of supply, a multi-tiered approach is required, from targeting the major global arms manufacturers and suppliers in order to encourage them to show greater restraint in the sale of weapons to African countries that are experiencing armed conflict, to establishing stiffer internal arms transfer controls, to regulating the activities of arms brokers and private security companies.

In practical terms, it is impossible to place a ban on the production and transfer of SALW in the country. According to Musah, apart from the fact that they perform some legitimate functions in the governance process, they are widely used in hunting to supplement the predominantly starch-based diet in the rural communities of the country (Onuoha, 2006). In addition, SALW are sturdy, durable and reusable, and hence are difficult to eliminate. Government must consequently improve and strengthen national SALW laws and regulations, impose licensing requirements, and carefully restrict their manufacture and transfer. Addressing the demand side of the SALW problem can only be achieved if local conditions are taken into account. In the case of the Niger Delta region, the manner by which Nigeria is governed is one of the major root causes of violence as it distributes resources inequitably, which directly contributes to underdevelopment. This is particularly stark in the case of the Niger Delta region, which is one of the poorest in Nigeria, but is the largest generator of foreign exchange earnings in the country. Possible solutions can be found in the Ogoni Bill of Rights, Addendum to the Ogoni Bill of Rights and Kaiama Declaration, which articulate the core needs of minority ethnic groups in the region, such as greater regional autonomy and equitable access to oil revenue and land for the communities of the Niger Delta (Onuoha, 2006).

There have been some positive developments in terms of arms control and disarmament in Nigeria. For example, in October 1998 the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) established a moratorium on the import, export and manufacture of SALW. One of its aims was to institute a voluntary freeze on arms trade and eliminate existing illegal stocks from society. The agreement also calls for the creation of a national commission drawn from the state and civil society structures to supervise disarmament within each individual state. In May 2001 the Nigerian government inaugurated a national committee on the ECOWAS moratorium on SALW. The Nigerian government has also established a national committee to investigate and report on the proliferation and illicit trafficking of SALW within as well as in the country. Its members include representatives of the Army, Navy, State Security Services, Nigerian Immigration Service, National Drug Law Enforcement Agency and Ministry of Defence. In September 2003 the federal government announced an ‘arms surrender’ policy to recover weapons being used by ethnic militias in the Niger Delta. Although it recorded a modest success, no real long-term strategy for recovering SALW seems to be in place. Conversely, on the civil society platform, a coalition of non-governmental organisations in the Niger Delta launched a ‘mop-up the arms’ campaign in June 2003 (Onuoha, 2006).

Factors Militating Against Arms and Efforts to Curb SALW Proliferation in Nigeria

Musa (1999) poverty and criminality are the base of SALW proliferation in Nigeria is widespread poverty, despite Nigeria’s status as a major oil exporting country. A sharp contradiction exists between the fact that Nigeria is one of the world’s largest exporters of crude oil, and the fact that the standard of living of Nigerians is the 36th lowest in the world in terms of human development indicators. The Niger Delta region is a case in point. The situation in the region is symptomatic of what has been referred to as ‘criminal social neglect and ecological degradation’. The consequence of this is that the region of the country which is responsible for some 70% of the country’s income displays a degree of penury and poverty which stands in sharp contradiction to the wealth it produces. This has led to a militarised and militant youth population, which has been known to kidnap oil workers and defy security agencies, using their knowledge of the localities and their access to SALW.

For Agekame (2001) and Alemika (1993) failure of the state and its security agencies to guarantee security has transformed security from a public good provided by the government to a private necessity which individuals and groups have to provide for themselves through various means. This largely explains the proliferation of private security companies, vigilante groups, etc.

AREA OF THE STUDY

The area of the study covered was the Anambra state capital, Awka.

POPULATION OF THE STUDY

The population of this research was randomly selected among residents of Awka metropolis. The total number of respondents is 400

SAMPLE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

Sample is a fraction of the envisaged population that responded to the questionnaire administered to the population used for the study. Because of economic and time factor, the researcher employed random sampling.

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

The research instrument used in this study is a standard questionnaire, which was titled ‘The Management and Control of Small and Light Weapon Usage: A study of Awka, Anambra Sate. The questionnaire consist of two sections; section A consist of bio-data and section B consist of the research questions to be answered by the respondents. It was appropriately constructed to cover entire research questions raised in chapter one and other variables.

METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

Data for the study was collected through the primary data collection technique, the “Questionnaire”. The questionnaires were administered in person to the respondents, and the completed questionnaire was collected immediately after a explanation and guideline on how to answer the questionnaire.

METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

Data generated from respondents were collated via the tally system to obtain the frequency of occurrence of the scores, and the total score occurrence were computed and analyzed using simple percentage:

$$\text{Percentage (\%)} = \frac{x}{y} \times 100/1$$

Where: x = frequency of score occurrence

Y = total number of respondents

100 = constant.

PRESENTATION OF DATA AND ANALYSIS

This chapter is all about the data analysis and presentation of results according to the respondents. The instrument for data collection is questionnaire, four hundred (400) questionnaire were distributed to the inhabitants of Awka metropolis and 400 was duly returned and presented below:

Table 1:

Is there a relationship between the control of SALW and increased security threat in Awka?

	Response	Percentage (%)
Yes	300	75
No	100	25
Total	400	100%

The table above shows that there is a relationship between the control of SALW and increased security threats in Awka. 300 out of 400 that made up of 75% responded that there is a relationship between control of SALW and crime rate in Awka. While 25% of the respondents responded otherwise.

Table 2

Has the inability of state to deal with the demand factor heightened the proliferation of SALW in Awka?

	Response	Percentage (%)
Yes	350	87.5
No	50	12.5
Total	400	100%

Over 80 percent of the respondents insisted that the inability of the Nigerian state to deal with the demand factor on the control and management of Small and Light Weapon has heightened the proliferation of SALW in Awka while just about 12% feels otherwise.

Table 3

How would you rate the impact of the law enforcement agencies in checking the proliferation of SALW in

Awka?

	Response	Percentage (%)
Very Adequate	-	-
Adequate	100	25
Inadequate	300	75
Total	400	100%

From the table above, 300 respondents which is about 75% answered that the impacts of the law enforcement agencies has been inadequate, while 100 respondents amounting to 25% responded that the impacts of the law enforcement is adequate.

Table 4

Has the inability of law enforcement agencies to check to check the supply factors of SALW worsened security situation in Awka?

	Response	Percentage (%)
Yes	280	70
No	120	30
Total	400	100%

280 respondents (70%) responded that the inability of the law enforcement agencies to check the supply factors of small and light weapon has worsened security situation in Awka, 120 respondents (30%) insisted that the inability of the law enforcement agencies to check the supply factors of small and light weapon has not worsened security situation in Awka.

Table 5.

To what extent has the Nigerian fire arm law curbed the proliferation of small arm and light weapon in Awka?

	Response	Percentage (%)
Very Effectively	30	7.5
Effectively	70	17.5
Ineffectively	300	75
Total	400	100%

300 respondents (75%) ticked that the Nigerian fire arm law has been ineffective in curbing the proliferation of small and light weapon in Awka, 70 respondents (17.5%) insisted that that the Nigerian fire arm law has been effective in curbing the proliferation of small and light weapon in Awka, while only 30 respondents (7.5%) answered that the Nigerian fire arm law has been very effective in curbing the proliferation of small and light weapon in Awka.

FINDINGS

The major findings from the study include the following:

The instrument for data collection is questionnaire. Four hundred (400) questionnaires were distributed to selected people in Awka metropolis and four hundred were duly returned . the researcher can infer that there is a relative relationship between the control of small and light weapon usage and increased security threat in Awka Anambra state as Table 1 above shows that 75% of the respondents agreed responded yes while only 25% responded No.

The research also revealed that the inability law enforcement agencies to check the supply factors of small and light weapon has worsened the security situation in Awka. The table 2 above confirmed this fact with the following statistics Over 80 percent of the respondents insisted that the inability of the Nigerian state to deal with the demand factor on the control and management of Small and Light Weapon has heightened the proliferation of SALW in Awka while just about 12% feels otherwise.

Table 3 shows that the impact of law enforcement agencies in checking the proliferation of small and light weapons in Awka has been inadequate as 75% of the responses from respondents confirms it. Table 4 also pointed out that 280 respondents (70%) responded that the inability of the law enforcement agencies to check the supply factors of small and light weapon has worsened security situation in Awka,

Conclusively, table 5 above shows that that the Nigerian fire arm law has been ineffective in curbing the proliferation of small and light weapon in Awka, 70 respondents (17.5%) insisted that that the Nigerian fire arm law has been effective in curbing the proliferation of small and light weapon in Awka, while only 30 respondents (7.5%) answered that the Nigerian fire arm law has been very effective in curbing the

proliferation of small and light weapon in Awka.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A successful resolution of the SALW conundrum in Nigeria requires a holistic approach that addresses the underlying factors creating the demand for SALW and the sources of supply, rather than treating the SALW problem as an independent or a compartmentalized issue. Furthermore, because armed violence is also a socioeconomic issue, there is a much larger group of stakeholders and appropriate responses beyond law makers and law enforcers.

As earlier noted, the demand and supply factors of SALW proliferation are mutually dependent. Therefore, addressing one without the other may not produce the desired results. For instance, addressing the supply factor without simultaneously addressing the demand end may create a situation where arms become more expensive to acquire without necessarily preventing their acquisition, since those acquiring it may still be able to afford it. An effective approach requires coordinated and sustained legislative, administrative and judicial strategies that address the factors encouraging demand for arms and concurrently dam the outlets through which illicit arms are proliferated. The strategies should go beyond the national level because of the cross-border implications of SALW. The proliferation of SALWs is posing a grave threat to security and development in Nigeria These arms should be cleaned up if the country is to achieve a measurable degree of security of life and property. There is, therefore, the need for the Nigerian government to pursue a robust strategy that could reduced if not eradicate the menace. The following intervention mechanisms are recommended to include:

- The Nigerian government should encapsulates, strengthen institutions and processes of governance to enhance social provisioning for its citizens, who are becoming increasingly frustrated over governance failure, thereby resorting to violent crimes that increase demand for SALW and it must also extends to an aggressive job creation programme for Nigeria's teeming and idle youths who are as a result become hopeless.
- There is a need for interventions at the national, state and local levels to be strengthened and promote peaceful coexistence amongst the diverse ethno-religious and political groups in Nigeria. This would help minimize the outbreak and persistence of violent conflicts that stoke arms proliferation.
- The National Orientation Agency should partner with credible civil society organizations (CSOs) and the media to mount enlightenment and orientation programmes on the practice of security situation awareness or security consciousness critical to crime prevention. This will enable people to appreciate the importance of monitoring developments around them and to report unwholesome activities (arms trafficking) to security agencies.
- Adoption of a national arms control strategy (NACS) to guide the clean-up and prevention of SALWs circulation. The proposed establishment of a National Commission on the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (NATCOM) should be fast-tracked to lead this effort, involving collaboration with CSOs, NATFORCE and other stakeholders.
- Implementation of effective collaborative mechanisms between security agencies and border communities to enhance information sharing on activities along the borders.
- The strengthening of border security arrangements through enhanced intra- and inter-state collaboration among security and intelligence agencies in maritime and land border areas, to ensure effective tracking and interdiction of SALWs traffickers.
- Robust funding and provision of equipment for security agencies, including security posts at the nation's entry points: land, sea and airports.
- Conduct of regular and comprehensive verification exercises to ensure that government arms are not being stolen.

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